

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2704

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0770

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BR, GY

SUBJECT: PROPOSED TRAVEL OF AMCONSUL BELEM TO RORAIMA

REF: BRASILIA 3392

1. I APPRECIATE THE CAUTIOUS APPROACH OF AMEMBASSY BRASILIA TO QUESTION OF TRAVEL BY AMCONSUL BELEM IN PORTION OF HIS CONSULAR DISTRICT BORDERING ON GUYANA. GOG IS INDEED HIGHLY SENSITIVE ABOUT ALL SORTS OF ACTIVITIES IN ENTIRE RORAIMA/RUPUNUNI FRONTIER REGION. FONMIN WILLS CONFIRMED TO ME SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT GOG HAS EFFECTIVELY CLOSED BORDER WITH BRAZIL AND HARDLY A DAY PASSES WITHOUT SOME GUYANESE INFORMANT COMING TO US WITH HIGHLY COLORED REPORTS OF BORDER CLASHES BETWEEN GUYANESE AND BRAZILIAN TROOPS. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DEVELOP HARD EVIDENCE TO CORROBORATE THESE REPORTS, BUT AGAIN FONMIN WILLS ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME LAST WEEK THAT THERE HAVE BEEN MINOR HARRASSMENT-TYPE INCIDENTS ALONG IRENG RIVER WHICH FORMS NORTHERN HALF OF BORDER BETWEEN GUYANA AND BRAZIL.

2. I CONCUR WITH BRASILIA'S BELIEF THAT VISIT TO THE REGION OVER NEXT TWO MONTHS WOULD BE TIMELY AND WOULD HELP TO FILL IN GAPS IN OUR INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON A REMOTE REGION WHICH HAS ASSUMED SOME IMPORTANCE FOR OUR INTERESTS IN THE AREA. AN INITIAL VISIT TO BOA VISTA IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL.

3. I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN PROBABLY DEFUSE EVEN BURNHAM'S HAIR-
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TRIGGER PARANOIA BY SIMPLY TELLING WILLS IN ADVANCE THAT BRA-

ZILIANS HAVE INVITED JACOBINI TO VISIT TERRITORY OF RORAIMA, WHICH IS PART OF HIS DISTRICT, AND THAT WE ARE TELLING GOG IN ADVANCE SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO MMISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT HIS PRESENCE IN BORDER AREA IN LIGHT OF WILL'S COMMENTS TO ME ABOUT HIS GOVT'S CONCERN REGARDING SITUATION IN THAT REGION. I COULD ADD THAT I HAVE MADE SURE JACOBINI IS AWARE OF THE GOG ACTION TO CLOSE THE BORDER, OF THE CURRENT FLARE-UP OF MALARIA ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FRONTIER, AND OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS APPREHENSION ON THE GUYANA SIDE ABOUT BRAZILIAN ACTIVITIES.

4. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE GOG WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN WEAVING ANY SINISTER DESIGN INTO THE VISIT IN THE FACE OF AN OPEN DECLARATION IN ADVANCE. IF CONTRARY TO MY EXPECTATION WE DO ENCOUNTER A STRONG ADVERSE REACTION, OR IN EVENT SOMETHING GOES AMISS DURING FIRST VISIT TO BOA VISTA, WE COULD CALL OFF SUBSEQUENT TRAVEL IN REGION.
KREBS

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